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Mosques as emergency shelters in disaster prone regions (Article)

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Abstract

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Providing emergency shelter for victims of natural disasters is part of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies and in terms proper management of resources in the community. International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) among others have proposed framework for appropriate planning and design of emergency shelters. Recent flood occurrences in India, UK and Malaysia showed that the institution of mosque is highly appropriate to be used as emergency disaster shelter. This study analyses if mosques can function as an emergency shelter. The paper adopts the criteria set by IOM and FEMA to design properly functioning emergency shelter. Based on these, the design of common mosques is discussed considering different aspects, such as location, capacity and facilities. The institution of mosque is also analysed from the perspective of Islamic theology where mosques are seen as a place that provide social and welfare services to the community. The study recommends further study in this regard to propose specific guidelines for the mosque so that it can be utilised as an existing structure for providing emergency shelter for disaster victims. © Universiti Putra Malaysia Press

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